

Hi, my name is Tonia Qaisar. I am a senior at Whitefish Bay High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I have a 3.9 GPA and have been accepted to 4 out of 10 universities and colleges so far. I like to read, write, play the piano and guitar, sing, and hang out with my friends.

(My voice is like this because I am sick)

As I look ahead to my future and decide what college I will attend, I find myself looking back on my years at the UWM Children's Center. The center provided me and numerous other children with a place to go after school and during the summer. Without that place, I mostly likely would have been home alone or at work with my mom everyday after school.

The experience I had at the UWM Children's Center is one I'll never forget. I met so many friends and teachers that changed my life. The activities were endless, fun and educational, stimulating me much more than watching TV ever will, though I admit I do like to do that. I still talk to many of the people I met there between the ages of 5 and 11, including Rae William's DiMilo.

My time at the center also awakened many interests that I still hold today. It was at the UWM Children's Center where I acted in plays and learned to love music. I learned how to knit and weave, horseback ride, and swim. The center offers numerous classes and fieldtrips all year long, providing fun, learning activities for children of all ages.

The staff members at the center are loving and playful, and being an only child, they felt somewhat like older brothers and sisters to me. I knew I could trust them to guide me through my elementary school years.

While the center provided me with something to do after school, I know that it also gave my mom some peace of mind. She was working hard on her PhD, not far away from the center, in the chemistry building at UWM. I did spend my share of time at her lab; but I know she was relieved to know that I had a safe place to go after school. Although I cannot speak for her, I do suspect that the center made it easier for her to focus on her own education, knowing that her child was in good hands.

Leaving the UWM Children's Center was really hard for me! But when I look back on it now, I know I will always remember the people I met and the activities I participated in. It seems like so long ago that I was in 4th grade, walking to the center after school. I firmly believe that I would be a very different person today if I hadn't attended the UWM Children's Center. My experience there taught me essential social skills and introduced me to positive, constructive activities that I still enjoy today. When I think about going to college in the fall, getting a job in the future, having my own

family, I thank the UWM Children's Center for making my childhood years so memorable and shaping me into the person I am today.

My Mom came to United States in 1990 with a 2 years old version of me. She is so brave and my day care center helped her do what she wanted to achieve. Please welcome my mom Gul Afshan.